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ABSTRACT

This report identifies what Iowa teachers say must be done to transform schools comprehensively. Recommendations in the key areas of time, authority and responsibility, evaluation and accountability, and early childhood education, are offered. In regard to these recommendations, three major elements have the greatest leverage for change: decentralization of decision-making, personalization of instruction, and technology. The report argues that these elements have the power to transform schools at the lowest possible costs, and that business, education and government should support a common agenda at all levels to insure that schools are transformed in the shortest possible time. The report was based on 1,540 questionnaires submitted to focus groups of teachers, and responded to by teacher leaders at local, regional, and state levels. (SH)

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# TIME FOR A CHANGE

## A REPORT TO THE PEOPLE OF IOWA

James H. Sutton

### *Asking the Experts*

Iowa has a good record in educational reform. Ours is the only state to finance decentralized change. We involve many groups, organizations and sectors in our schools. Our students consistently out-perform others nationally; and Iowa's teachers are known nationally for educational quality, reform and innovation.

But even in Iowa, schools today are the same as they were at the beginning of the "excellence movement." Permanent structural changes in schools have not occurred. In part, this is because the recommendations of teachers have not been heard clearly. While many issue reports about education, few ask teachers for information. In this report, Iowa's teachers say clearly what must be done to improve schools.

### *Method*

We started with a scientific sample of Iowa's teachers. From responses to a questionnaire of one hundred items, four major concerns were identified. These were made into questions and taken to groups of teachers, selected at random. Discussion in each group was transcribed and analyzed. A summary was drafted and submitted to state-level teacher leaders, who adopted recommendations. A report was drafted and submitted to leaders of local teachers' associations. Recommendations were returned to the state-leaders' group for review. Many were incorporated into a draft which was approved by the ISEA's Executive Board. The result fairly and scientifically defines the advice which teachers have for Iowans.

We begin with the school building, because the building is where everything comes together for students. The second part deals with state-level reforms which will support change in buildings. The third part deals with federal changes which support state and local changes. Finally, we offer a vision of schools in the future.

In this report, we take a "systems approach." We look at the way our proposals interact. Then we select elements which are moral, professional, equitable, efficient, and viable. Finally, we select only those elements which have the greatest leverage for transforming schools permanently.

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## *A Lack of Time*

Our greatest need is time, time to educate every child fully. We need time to change our teaching styles so that we can work with individuals rather than groups. We need time to prepare for classes and instruction. We need time just to "catch up," let alone to prepare. And, we need time for professional improvement.

We need time to involve parents with schools and their children's learning. We need time to educate parents about parenting and learning in the home. We need time to personalize learning for each child. We need time for summer school -- not for all children, but for those who might require or profit from it. A longer school day is not desirable, as this, in itself, does not improve the quality of instruction.

We need time to develop schedules which are flexible and which reflect parents' needs and students' learning styles. We need time to create professional teams which guide learning and help children keep growing. We need time for planning during the school day. We need time to work on skills which allow us to work interactively toward each child's unique potential. We need more time just to teach.

We need time to collect the information needed to make decisions about our work environment -- the school building. We need time to analyze that information, ponder it, and design proposals for the future. We need time to make schools "a safe place for the mind to grow." We need time to make decisions which transform schools while reforming them.

We need time to educate every child -- both those with special needs and the "average" child. We need time for professional journals, sabbaticals, graduate courses and degrees, continuing education, our health, our families and our own lives. We need time to work in and make a contribution to our neighborhoods. We need time for planning, working with volunteers and paraprofessionals, real evaluation, professional growth, mentoring new teachers, helping other colleagues, working with children with special needs, and for mainstreaming.

## *The Missing Ingredient*

We can save time by getting rid of non-instructional intrusions on teaching -- like unnecessary announcements from the public address system. Professional time can be saved by delegating lunchroom duty, study hall and playground supervision to others. Time can be saved by removing things from the

curriculum when others are added. But overall, we need more time for quality. In fact, we need more time just to decide how to use our time. Until teachers have the time to change, schools will resist change. Schools need time, for a change.

## *Some Assumptions*

Time costs money, and money is in short supply. Since money is limited, new money should be spent on priorities. Priorities should be set by those nearest to the point of implementation, teachers. Additional money will be needed, because the increase in new money controls the rate of change. Retooling can be financed without new money, but only if innovation is delayed. Any delay sacrifices increasing numbers of students to a system which is already obsolete.

Greater efficiency in obsolete schools cannot prepare children for the Twenty-first century. Unless there's a change in the structure of education, students will be increasingly unable to compete in a world economy, contribute to democracy, or achieve personal fulfillment. A major change in quality is needed; this depends on adequate and assured financing for education and educational reform.

## *Proposals for Time*

These innovations about time can help to transform schools:

- Time for team planning, team teaching, and cooperative education at the building level.
- Time to plan for com- prehensive school transfor- mation through participatory decision making.
- Time to learn and deploy new technology which improves teaching and productivity for students and teachers.
- Redesign of instructional time to include a wider variety of teaching strategies, such as discovery and guided discovery so that teaching styles can be matched with learning styles. This may require the elimination of some items from the curriculum to make room for others.
- A longer teacher contract year with any additional time dedicated to preparing, planning, mentoring new teachers, and growing professionally.
- Time to participate in state-level professional activities, such as serving on or attending meetings of the FINE Commission, the Board of Educational Examiners, or the many committees of the Department of Education.

- Redesign of the school year -- in terms of total hours, not days.
- Relief from distracting intrusions into instructional time and the learning environment.
- Professional discretion over the use of professional time.
- Creation of a maximum class size in traditional instructional classrooms which calculates class size by including weights established for each student with special needs.

## *Authority and Responsibility*

Teachers are licensed by the state. We have the exclusive legal authority to teach; yet we lack effective authority over local decisions relating to teaching. We have no authority over schedules in buildings, even though schedules control the learning environment. We have little authority over professional development, a building's program budget, the hiring of other professionals in our buildings, student placement in regular or special education, discipline policies for students, planning time, involuntary transfers of personnel, space allocation, peer evaluation for licensure, or practice teachers from teacher education programs. Authority exists on paper; but in practice, there is responsibility only.

One reason schools are inflexible is that teachers lack authority over professional functions. We are ready to build trust by working cooperatively; to interact with one another collegially; and to build meaningful goals and commitments for schools. But we are blocked by obsolete, undemocratic notions of authority and bureaucracy. To do our jobs, we need a clear definition of our authority.

We want to make real decisions -- beyond token "input" -- and we want to implement decisions meaningfully. Central authority is appropriate for some things; but school boards must be willing to delegate effective authority to principals and teachers in order to achieve results. Only teachers and principals can effectively organize their own work.

We are willing to change collective bargaining so that it complements decisions made by professionals in school buildings; but superintendents and school boards must support shared authority and decisions made by others. Real participatory governance is necessary. The "narrow legalistic conception of governance," which rules schools today, makes effective schools impossible and sets an anti-democratic example for students.

The process must be fair. It must give effective authority over instructional matters to those who are exclusively licensed to perform such tasks. Decisions should be based on professional knowledge and knowledge of individual students. Because each child and learning environment is unique, there will be great variety. This is an asset.

Decisions do not occur in isolation. They are part of a district's total decision-making system. In such a system, teachers serve in leadership roles. Principals, too, are key players. We are ready to be leaders, make commitments, and transform schools permanently. But others must be ready to see and accept us in new roles. We are willing to change, but others must allow us to do things differently.

## *Recurring Themes*

Iowa's teachers are willing to change the way decisions are made. We are ready to define teachers' unique responsibilities in school buildings; but we need effective authority over processes which define what teachers do. We are ready to be accountable for our decisions; but meaningful accountability depends on effective professional authority.

## *Recommendations*

These hold great promise for transforming authority in school buildings:

- Teachers and principals have effective authority over decisions which affect their work and time.
- Instructional decisions are differentiated from building management issues.
- Knowledge, training and information about collaboration and effective leadership are available to principals and teachers.
- Governance of the school site is shared by principals and teachers.
- Decisions about what can be done and should be done are realistic and based on available resources.
- Multiple options about goals, based on available resources, are provided by educators in each building for board approval.
- Accountability for achieving goals is limited to programs which have been mutually agreed upon.

- Collective bargaining supports professional decisions made in each building by teachers and principals.

- "Action research" -- research from practice and practice from research -- drives decisions at the school site.

- Administrative and board support for decision making in school buildings is present if schools are to be transformed.

- Innovations are based on readiness, are voluntary, and are committed to gradual rather than sudden change.

- Teachers, principals and administrators are accountable for meeting the educational needs of their students. The decision on how to teach remains the exclusive prerogative of those who are licensed for this purpose.

- Teachers and principals have the effective authority to perform the tasks for which they are exclusively licensed by the state.

## *Evaluation and Accountability*

Economic competitiveness, vital democracy and personal fulfillment cannot be achieved by being more efficient at turning out a product which is evermore obsolete. As "lockstep" instruction is counterproductive, so also is accountability for lockstep instruction. To succeed, all must be willing to do things differently.

Also, accountability means little if students are unprepared to learn. In this connection, educators are in a "no win" situation. Teachers cannot be responsible for learning among students who are hungry, sick, working long hours at a job after school, or physically and psychologically abused. And yet, teachers must make up for such deficiencies when nobody else will.

A third precondition of accountability is autonomy. Professional authority is prerequisite to professional accountability. We cannot be accountable for professional results unless we are treated as professionals capable of and charged with making professional decisions. When those accountable are not key players in making decisions, the result is counterproductive.

Also, accountability is a quality, not a product. Like justice, it's difficult to achieve. Professionals cannot guarantee what they do, because every profession is both an art and a science. Teaching is an art as well as a science; it is the inspired application of knowledge to affect growth. "Cause-and-effect" relationships are rare. A person's education is an

accumulation of a lifetime of thoughts, feelings and actions -- often unplanned and intangible. As an end in itself, accountability is meaningless; it is significant only when it affects the process which it evaluates.

Multiple choice and other standardized tests have limited value in assessing higher-order skills and complex tasks. New measures for assessment and evaluation are needed to measure thinking, feeling, doing, and their interaction. These must assess higher-order learning and teaching, as well as basic skills. Both the quantitative and the qualitative can be measured, but only by differing, mutually exclusive criteria.

Student evaluation must be more personalized as learning is customized. The best evaluation measures each learner's performance against one's personal growth rather than "the average." Student evaluation should reflect ability rather than chronological age. Feedback must be timely and sensitive to self-esteem. Otherwise, the chance to benefit will be reduced to punishment. Responsibility and accountability must not be confused. The effect of class size on quality must be considered.

Effectiveness depends on effective principals and teachers. Decisions about effectiveness and evaluation must occur at the level closest to implementation. Students and parents must be responsible as well as teachers and administrators. Evaluation should include follow-up studies with students after they have entered the work force. Building-level goals should be clear and simple, since multiple missions cloud outcomes and impede achievement.

Parents and others -- from business and the community -- are needed in schools to improve understanding. New methods of assessment are needed to measure learning in unusual situations. Many students attend three or four schools in a year; others learn in correctional facilities, hospitals and juvenile homes. Additional support and recognition is needed for teachers in demanding environments.

## *Recurring Themes*

We are ready to be accountable for the progress of students, but accountability must be real. It must do more than filter out bad news and manufacture good news. It must do more than reassure the public or thump deficiencies from a bully pulpit. Real accountability affects the lives of students. It requires new mechanisms which measure new achievements by individuals and which support change.

## *Recommendations on Accountability*

These principles can develop a new system of accountability in schools and other settings:

- Student evaluation is based on individual growth. It provides continuous reporting after decisions are made by professionals responsible for a student's learning. These are developed for all students and implemented in lieu of mass instruction. Parents, teachers, and students participate in this process, and each has the right of appeal.

- Accountability is local; parents, school board, community, students and the teaching profession are accountable to one another.

- Evaluation recognizes that the most resistant problems of mass education are caused by the system itself rather than the people within it.

- Recommendations by evaluators, rather than mandates, are provided as feedback in a timely manner.

- Evaluation and accountability relate to educational reform. They take responsibility for changing the structure of education. They deal with the evaluation of programs and decision-making processes as well as with individuals or teams or professionals. They account for inputs, processes and outputs, since education depends on all three. They reflect qualitative as well as quantitative factors.

- Evaluation is fair and limited to areas of performance which are under the teacher's, student's, or principal's actual control.

## *Beginning at the Beginning*

Age is often the least important fact about children, yet schools depend on chronological age. Ample evidence exists that learning is enhanced when individuals learn at their own rate, yet education is a lockstep from preschool to PhD. Learning is greatly improved for disadvantaged children through a quality preschool opportunity; yet programs that work, like Head Start, are inadequately financed by government. Many studies point to a large savings in social costs for adults if the health, family, nutritional and educational needs of small children and their mothers are provided; yet spending for remediation and correction has priority over prevention. We must invest more in our children earlier if we expect more from them in return.

While restructuring and retooling needs to occur and be financed at all levels of education simultaneously, an immediate return can be realized by transforming education at the beginning. "Beginning," means early and late childhood from birth to what is presently grade six. "Early" and "late childhood" are used to emphasize that these differ from traditional grade-based, age-based instruction.

A new structure for "beginning education" will meet the needs of children as individuals. It will bring parents into the educational process and provide them with parenting skills if needed. It will match our hours to those of the parent. It will allow business to support education by freeing employees for volunteer work in schools or providing them with time during the work day for working with teachers. It will allow teachers to communicate more fully with parents.

It will provide flextime for school employees. It will build professional teams around the whole child in order to meet every child's needs in health, nutrition, family support, and education. It will apply technology so as to track and minister to the needs of each child through personalized learning. It will transform each classroom into a clinical setting. It will link teachers to children in many new instructional ways. Early Childhood Centers will transform elementary schools from mass production based on lockstep to learning environments which cater to the growth of individuals.

In these centers, children will be educated differently. Students will learn at their own rate. As they move through the educational system, additional levels can be transformed. In thirteen years, the entire structure will be made over. But this "make-over" must be financed. Transforming elementary schools alone will require a substantial permanent increase in school aid.

## *Proposals for Early Childhood Education*

Reform can be made effective and permanent if the structure of elementary education is transformed as follows:

- The elementary school is a new professional setting which deals with the needs of the whole child from birth through ability levels now associated with grade three. These "Early Childhood Centers" are based on needs. While not all children will require help from birth, help is available as necessary.

- The work of reforming beginning education requires all-day kindergarten. This must be available every day, all day, in every district, for every child who is ready for it.

- Each school district conducts an assessment to determine how it is meeting the needs of children.

- Instruction eliminates grade levels and Carnegie units. Instead, it is based on personalized learning which accounts for each child's unique talents, interests and learning style.

- Early Childhood Centers are staffed with professionals from education, health, and social work who work together as a team on behalf of individual students and their families; but authority and responsibility rests with the teacher who develops and monitors a student's learning.

- Parents are involved in the work of these centers in empowered roles. They receive help to increase their ability to support their children's learning.

- Government eliminates conflicting jurisdictions and permits Early Childhood Centers to operate free from competing bureaucracies. Unnecessary rules are eliminated, and new state support structures are enacted.

- New technology is financed, developed, and tested in Early Childhood Centers to support personalized learning.

- Teachers have professional development which prepares them for educating the whole child as an individual in a nongraded setting.

- Resources are reallocated from existing intervention and correction programs as savings are realized.

- Reallocation across and within sectors of education occurs as interconnections are identified.

- Grades four through six are transformed to nongraded "Late Childhood Centers" as children move on from Early Childhood Centers. This allows gradual rather than sudden reform.

- Licensure for teachers reflects student developmental states rather than grade levels. Four categories should be created: Early Childhood; Late Childhood; Early Adolescence; and Late Adolescence and Adult. These should overlap, since the transition between them is gradual.

- Licensure is based on what teachers need to know and be able to do, rather than completion of courses.

- The creation of Early Childhood Centers creates a new professional setting which blends the work of nurses, social workers and teachers. Licensure authority is located in a single agency to permit flexibility, promote effectiveness and prevent bureaucratic entanglements.

- Licensed paraprofessionals in schools are well trained and well paid to perform their important tasks.

## *Elements in Common*

This report has dealt with Time; Authority and Respon- sibility; Evaluation and Accountability; and Early Childhood Centers. These are interrelated. Only by integrating change among these areas can schools can be transformed permanently. Single or un- connected reforms will be absorbed.

The next phase of educational reform is comprehensive school transformation. It will be characterized by:

- Many items interacting simultaneously within each proposed reform.
- Focus on the school building as the unit of productivity from which advances are measured.
- Increasing responsibility, autonomy and accountability at the building level.
- Decreasing "standardized" regulation with greater leadership from departments, bureaus, and programs at the state level.
- Local ("bottom up") and state ("top down") efforts which support each other.
- Emphasis on higher-order learning and multiple measures of achievement.
- Emphasis on meeting the needs of constituencies at the building level.
- Support for a multiplicity of diverse outcomes for students and buildings.
- Emphasis on personalized learning for every child, including the "average" child.
- Increasing utilization of decentralized electronic technology, using software, as an additional teaching tool which is available to the teacher.
- Increasing productivity and a shift in labor-intensive costs from rote to higher-order professional tasks as a result of technology.
- Instruction which is increasingly self-regulated and nongraded.
- Involvement with the whole child by teams of educators, social workers and nurses.

- Emergence of the school building as a clearinghouse for personalized health, social, community and educational services for students across bureaucratic and professional lines.
- Increased flexibility in licensure with simultaneously higher standards.
- Modest -- but assured and continuous -- state financing for pilot programs which demonstrate reforms.
- Higher salaries to attract and retain persons with professional knowledge and preparation.
- Maintaining present reform programs with increasing focus on reforms which interact to produce restructuring.
- Building on the trust and consensus produced by the Iowa Educational Excellence Act (Phase III).
- Allocating instructional and categorical local, state and federal funds directly to individual school buildings for allocation by teams of professionals.
- More simplicity at the state and federal levels; more complexity and diversity at the building level.
- Opportunity for educators to play many diverse professional roles in buildings and increased professionalism and autonomy among educators.
- Agreement that consensus is the basic decision-making mode in school buildings, school districts, and state-level educational planning.
- Gradual change resulting from self-motivated, voluntary actions.
- Greater emphasis on the role of the building principal.
- Greater emphasis on the formative role of principals and less emphasis on the summative role, which is shifted to central administrators.
- Fusion of research and practice by teachers and teacher educators.
- Developing a new class of licensed paraprofessionals who may perform limited teaching responsibilities under the supervision of a licensed professional.
- Greater support, interaction and respect between schools and higher education.

- Developing school boards as policymakers rather than micromanagers.
- Developing transformational leaders in administration at the building level.
- Visible, public adjustments by teacher associations toward professionalism.
- Responsibility for maintaining momentum for reform shifting from politicians to parents and educators.
- Emergence of a new professional setting from teaching, nursing and social work, beginning at the Early Childhood level.
- Self-directed, experiential professional development for teachers studying together in small groups.
- Teachers and teachers' associations taking responsibility for the development and maintenance of professional culture.
- Greater communication among all stakeholders in education at all levels.

## STATE LEVEL PRIORITIES FOR SCHOOL TRANSFORMATION

Our priorities for school buildings are (1) Decentralized Technology; (2) Personalized Instruction; and (3) Decentralized Decision Making, which includes both shared decision making and accountability. Each requires retraining for teachers and new funds to support innovation. Taken together, they provide the leverage needed to change schools permanently.

While they operate within school buildings, they require state support. The state must prioritize around those reforms which most transform school buildings. This will accelerate change, transform school structure, improve quality, and keep waste to a minimum.

State government should concentrate on actions which contribute the most to change. In this way, scarce resources can be directed efficiently and waste can be minimized. Waste will be greatest where reforms are "one-shot," unconsidered, occur in isolation, are "shotgunned," imposed from above, or motivated by politics. Concentrating on three elements -- Personalized Instruction; Decentralized Technology; and Decentralized Decision Making (and the new training they require) -- will produce systemic change at the lowest cost.

## *Technology*

Many agree that new technology, available to teachers as a tool, can transform teaching from mass to personalized learning. But few agree on how this tool shall be shaped and delivered to teachers. Those with an interest in hardware oversell technology, emphasize great projects over the small, and begin empire-building. Hardware affecting large numbers of students is purchased without research from pilot programs. Expensive systems are purchased without evidence that they're better than existing methods.

Some technology reinforces mass instruction just as we are trying to create personalized instruction. "Distance learning," for example, is given priority over microteaching; "add on" programs are created rather than new programs. Sometimes, systems are justified on instructional grounds, but used for administrative purposes or are unrelated to schools in any way. At other times, technology is promoted as a way to avoid school reorganization.

Technology can reinforce "passive learning," increasing the drop out rate. It can improve efficiency at the expense of quality. It can be based on the latest fad. These detract from more productive approaches and can lead to expensive systems which are unused.

Our greatest need is for technology which increases the number and quality of tools available to us as we teach individual students. Such tools involve microteaching, professional diagnostics with data basing, and individualization of instruction. From a teacher's perspective, the best
technology is decentralized. It is a tool, not a communications medium or an instructional method; and it should be implemented gradually, not suddenly.

## *Recurring Themes*

New statewide electronic systems must be based on pilot studies and research before they are used on students. These should support personalized learning. The politics of technology should not be permitted to control decisions about the use of technology. If politics controls, innovation will be impeded. An unplanned project -- even when effective -- alienates the teachers whom it's intended to assist. Ineffective projects delay the promise of technology for years. Any delay sacrifices the next generation of students to the doctrine of "technology for its own sake." Technology must be deployed by users who have the power to make informed choices.

## *Recommendations about Technology*

These principles support technology which transforms schools:

- Program and funding priority is given to technological projects which relieve teachers so that we may provide higher- order learning, personalized learning, and remedial intervention to students.

- Technological projects include "real time" interactive electronic classroom-based systems which provide rote instruction and drill; monitor student progress on instruction and drill; analyze student progress; compare such progress to other students in progressively larger educational units; provide a pedagogical database for intervention strategies, including lesson plans; and provide a professional database for retrieving research in a form which is usable in the instructional setting.

- State projects in technology are evaluated on the basis of their contribution to the above goal to establish priority.

- New technologies build on old technologies.

- Simple technologies take precedence over complex ones.

- Decentralized technologies take precedence over centralized ones.

- Every teacher has a telephone and a computer.

- An "end-point users' advisory committee," of teachers and principals only, sets priorities, locates technological needs and advises the Legislature. This committee should parallel the "Narrowcast Advisory Committee," but report to the State Board of Education.

- Statewide innovations aren't implemented widely until pilot programs have been evaluated in controlled research programs.

- Follow-up research is conducted to evaluate programs.

- Extensive training, together with time to develop instructional applications, must be available to realize the promise of technology. These require financial support.

- Participation in pilot programs is voluntary for teachers and students, and no person is part of a controlled experiment without prior consent.

## *Personalized Instruction*

The national reports agree: Education must be transformed from mass production to personalized instruction. Only by educating every child to the fullest can we hope to compete internationally, achieve equity, support democracy, or gain fulfillment. Only by transforming schools can individuals be educated fully. The reports are right; we need to transform schools to produce quality in quantity.

These goals are not new. They are the same goals which have guided American education for over a century. But they have not been realized. They remain unrealized because our society placed higher priority on equity than on quality, and then failed to finance even equity. Even so, Iowa's schools delivered equity. Opportunity of access has been realized, even though it came at the expense of quality and the needs of individuals. But excellence for everyone is a new goal which has yet to be attempted. To meet this goal, we must educate students in a new way.

The goal -- "excellence for every child" -- is difficult to achieve. For one thing, when teachers teach individuals, the structure of schools neutralizes and absorbs the innovation. Obsolete systems create the defects which make quality impossible.

Teaching individually means developing new teams of professionals to diagnose, intervene and evaluate students on personalized learning. It means developing new ways to teach higher-order skills and to evaluate them; using technology to provide repetitive instruction, evaluation, diagnosis of learning disorders, and intervention through personalized learning; the time to develop new techniques; professional training to learn and share knowledge; dealing with the whole child; and learning at the student's own pace without respect to grade level. Most of all, it means doing what has never been done before. Developing personalized instruction means reinventing schools and transforming teaching into a true and fully recognized profession.

Among the innovations needed for tomorrow's schools, teaching individually is the greatest unknown. There is little research about it, and most of this is not usable in the classroom. A pedagogy for individual instruction does not exist. Technology will play an important part, but the content of that technology has yet to be developed. Professional development will be important, but the nature of retraining remains unknown. The new mandate for personalized instruction is the greatest leap of faith since our national commitment to equality of educational opportunity. The teaching profession is ready to accept this challenge and make good on it, just as it did for educational opportunity. But as we did for that mandate, we begin today without knowing how. As with equity, we will have to create solutions as we go along.

## *Recommendations for Personalized Instruction*

Personalized instruction will be enhanced by the following:

- Every student has personalized instruction planned around the student's unique abilities, learning style, past achievements, temperament, goals and readiness.

- Teachers have time to develop effective personalized learning programs for students.

- Progress for each student is by electronic record which links student progress, the personalized learning plan, the recommendations of the student's professional support team, the results of rote and higher order learning exercises compared with other students at different scales of reference; diagnosis of learning disorders; interventions; and reference to case studies and research.

- A database of personalized learning plans, methods, theories, microteaching, software, and lesson plans is available electronically to every teacher.

- Professional development and licensure (including Phase III) center on Personalized Instruction, Applied Technology, and Decentralized Decision Making as new areas to be supported and evaluated.

- Teachers have sabbaticals and short-courses in Personalized Instruction, Applied Technology, Software Development, and Decentralized Decision Making.

- Extensive training together with time to develop techniques for personalized instruction must be made available if the promise of such instruction is to be realized. This will require financial support.

- Research is integrated with teaching; professors and teachers work together to understand personalized instruction, applied technology, and collegial decision-making.

- Research and development is a major cost item for Iowa's Department of Education; researchers compete to meet specifications developed by the Department.

## *Decentralizing Decision-Making*

When we issued our last report to you in 1983, we knew that decentralization was important; but we did not know much about it. It was a new commitment, another leap into the unknown. We made the commitment because decentralization was central to transforming schools. Since then, much has been learned. Some of this new knowledge relates to school buildings, mentioned in a previous section of this report, "Accountability and Responsibility." Here we consider state-level implications.

Few innovative projects have been undertaken. Some are the result of Phase III. Others -- like the Mastery in Learning Project at the Paul Norton School in Bettendorf and the Learning Laboratory Initiative in Marshalltown -- are the result of collaborative work among the Iowa State Education Association, the National Education Association, and school districts.

We now know that reform must be integrated throughout a school district and each school building. Change is most likely in districts which have enough stability to tolerate change. A facilitator from outside of the district is an essential ingredient.

Districts are capable of transforming themselves, but new money is necessary. Trust is the prerequisite of collegiality and change. Nothing can be done without the support of administrators and school boards. Teachers need training in group dynamics, collegial decision making and parental involvement.

Teachers' greatest need is professional information about the school buildings in which they work. The involvement of parents is essential. Each building has unique problems. There is more than one solution for a problem, and each solution is unique. Solutions often do not transfer from one building to another, although support and enthusiasm are contagious.

Teachers are willing to accept responsibility for making professional decisions in school buildings. Building-level decision-making is time consuming and requires constant diligence. Voluntary change and participation works well and is the only approach that produces self-regulating change over the long term.

Change is a function of new dollars available for change. Retooling schools is as expensive as retooling any business. We know how to link school transformation to evaluation, group pay for group work, site-based decision-making, and Phase III.

Teachers and their representatives are ready to support school transformation. Business groups -- like the Business Roundtable and the Iowa Futures Project -- support schools and change. Legislators and the Governor support educational reform and link future financial support to change.

Decentralized decision making is a proven strategy for transforming schools comprehensively and permanently. But few districts have begun the process of comprehensive change. In part, this is because change requires financing. No state funds have been available to support pilot projects in comprehensive school transformation. Change could be advanced if there were pilot programs for schools willing to change.

### *Recommendations about Decentralized Decision Making*

Here are state-level initiatives which support decentralization:

- The state should finance pilot projects in comprehensive school transformation. Each project should be for multiple years. Projects should include small, midsize and large districts. They should support multiple and varied approaches to change on a collaborative, voluntary, and collegial basis.

- Responsibility for research and development for pilot projects in comprehensive school transformation should be located in Iowa's Department of Education. A major permanent allocation for this purpose should be provided. Application to provide services must be competitive and based on written specifications.

- School aid directs instruction and instruction-related resources to school buildings, to be allocated by local building teams.

- Any extra days of working time for teachers should be allocated to school buildings as a "professional bank" to support in-service and professional activities.

- Programs in parental involvement are encouraged for all buildings.

- A voluntary, higher order of accreditation for school buildings is created by Iowa's Department of Education or the North Central Association. Schools meeting the higher-order requirements are excused from the rule-driven standards of traditional state accreditation. Higher-level standards include criteria on collegial decision-making, building-based resource allocation, personalized learning, technology, and building-based professional development for teachers and principals.

- Extensive training together with time to develop shared decision making must be made available if the promise of autonomy is to be realized. These will require financial support.

- To implement the team concept and make the school a viable clinical setting for dealing with the needs of the whole child, every school building must have a full-time principal, a full-time counselor, and a full-time media specialist; a school psychologist; a school social worker; and a fully licensed school nurse. Necessary paraprofessional and secretarial assistance must also be available.

- A new class of licensed paraprofessional-- requiring two years of college -- performs limited teaching duties under the direction of a teacher so that teachers have time for governance and the development of personalized learning for every child.

- The right of teachers to effectively perform the professional tasks for which we are exclusively licensed is honored and maintained. These rights are made explicit in the laws or rules of our state and in local school board policies.

- Each district has a decision-making process which decides among different instructional packages based on different levels of financial support. These are created by joint action of school boards and educators in each school building.

- Professional licensure supports comprehensive school change by requiring educators and their preparation programs to show evidence of ability to deal with collegial decision making, applied technology and personalized instruction.

- Decentralization is supported by state appropriations earmarked directly to school buildings.

- State mandates and rules are reduced, since decentralization cannot be achieved through centralized state planning.

- State policy makers support innovation and change with assured and adequate appropriations.

- Teachers' salaries reach the national average so that Iowa can compete for talent needed in the complex schools of the future.

- A mentor program for beginners is provided by the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners. The state must finance released time for beginning teachers and their mentors before implementing the program.

## THE FEDERAL CONNECTION

Education is controlled locally in America, and no one wants it any other way. No one favors federal control over education, particularly in the absence of federal financial support. But the federal government has an important role. It can call public attention to problems, as it has been doing since 1982. It can provide financial assistance to categorical programs, as it does for special education and Head Start. It can support innovation and school transformation, though it has not yet done so.

A federal role is needed in innovation and change. School transformation requires additional financing, and this controls the rate of change and innovation in schools. Also, no state has been able to finance comprehensive school change. While many states have made major financial commitments for change, all -- including Iowa -- have found it necessary to withdraw that support for financial reasons.

The federal government has another role: It attaches conditions to federal funding. These can distort and control state programs. Often, they involve hidden costs which accrue at state and local expense. This can be expensive, convoluted, inefficient, and counterproductive. Special education, for example, is afflicted by micromanagement, rules and excessive federal regulation. Government must interact effectively at all levels if schools are to realize their new mandate. The federal government must do its part.

### *Recommendations for Federal Action*

The following outlines a meaningful, change-oriented federal role in education:

- The federal government creates one federally financed project to demonstrate comprehensive school change in each Congressional District. Projects are selected on a competitive basis by committees established by state departments of education for this purpose. Grants are substantial and tied to applied technology, decentralized decision-making, and personalized instruction.

- The federal government deregulates its educational programs.

- Federal funds for instructional programs are allotted to school buildings.

- The federal government withholds federal funds from professional schools which lack national accreditation. Student loans should not be available to students enrolled in unaccredited professional programs.

- The federal government coordinates its agencies to support children of all ages in health, education and welfare.

- The federal government aims its research programs in education at applied technology, decentralized decision making, and personalized learning.

## THE SCHOOL OF THE FUTURE

Iowa's schools still exist to prepare students for employment, citizenship, and personal fulfillment. These were once realized through seat-based instruction. But changes in technology, values, students, and the economy have made old methods inadequate. Our old approach permits defects and casualties. In our new world, human resources are so valuable that, to be competitive and effective, we must educate every child to the fullest.

America needs schools where all children succeed. Such a school provides personalized learning, educates rather than trains, and applies the best that is known about teaching in theory and practice. It creates an environment conducive to learning and is a safe place where the mind may grow. It is collegial rather than corporate and is a place where teachers and administrators shape the learning environment through shared decision making. It is based on the school building. And it has enough money, technology, and people to provide excellence to everyone.

The teaching profession is ready to create the schools of tomorrow from the schools of today. But we need to be authorized to innovate within the major systems which control learning at the building level. Such systems include compensation, evaluation, decision making, professional development, and student programs -- the very items authorized by Phase III. But while Phase III has fostered many innovations, it has not transformed schools. To transform schools, innovations must interact. Our challenge is to transform schools from corporate to collegial environments through innovations which interact to create the schools of the future. A few carefully chosen interventions can transform schools pervasively and permanently.

In transformed schools, technology will provide every student with a personalized learning program. Technology will free teachers from rote tasks and paperwork. Software will be developed and shared for instructional, professional, and reference purposes. Students will create instructional programs for themselves and others. Systems which integrate student responses and achievement will be available to a team of educators which regularly reviews and proscribes learning strategies for each child. Emphasis will be on higher-order learning.

Each student will be involved in interaction and discussion rather than lecture and presentation. There will be few, if any, intrusions into the learning process. Bells will disappear; students will learn at their own rate

and be evaluated against each individual's own growth. Students will progress from one level to another as they are ready. Students will learn in all three areas of human endeavor -- thinking, feeling, and doing -- and become active participants in their own learning.

Decisions about students will be made in school buildings. Only those licensed to do so will be permitted to make decisions about a student's progress or achievement. Decisions about the allocation of resources will be made by professionals in each learning center. Teaching will be a respected and autonomous profession, equal to any other. Students who choose to learn will be the norm and be respected for it by their peers. Compensation will be based, in part, on the achievement of building level goals. Teachers and administrators will work together collegially at the building level and have the support of others.

All the above relate to applied technology, personalized learning, and decentralized decision making. Implemented piecemeal, no change will occur, because the present structure absorbs single innovations. But implemented together, they will change schools comprehensively and permanently. Innovation in three key areas can produce "excellence for everyone."

These systemic changes depend on assured, sufficient financing, popular support, and cooperation among all levels of government. Without such support, schools may change eventually in response to massive social change. But for each year's delay, a year's worth of children will be sacrificed to a system which is already obsolete. In a time of great change, no nation can afford such a sacrifice and remain economically or politically viable.

The rate of change is controlled by money. New money is necessary for retooling, research, program design, professional development, technology, individualization of instruction and decentralized decision-making. If new money cannot be found, schools cannot change fast enough to impact the economic, social and personal decline now overtaking our nation. Large sums are necessary, over and above scheduled increases. All levels of government -- working with business,

### *Agribusiness and Educators -- Must Come Together*

It is not enough to have high expectations. We must also have high standards which are enforced. But given Iowa's head start on educational reform, both high standards and high expectations can be achieved with your help. With your help, schools can realize our nation's new goal of "excellence for everyone."